

## Statement on the Death of George Christian December 2, 2002

George Christian was an honorable, decent, and kind man who represented the best of public service, and he was devoted to his family. He was a statesman of the highest integrity. He also was a great Texan, whose wise counsel was sought by

generations of leaders. Laura joins me in offering our most heartfelt condolences to the Christian family. We are grateful for the life he lived and the many positive contributions he made to his country and to his State.

## Remarks in Shreveport, Louisiana December 3, 2002

Thank you all very much. I'm glad I came. Thank you all. Please be seated—unless you don't have a chair. [*Laughter*] It's an honor to be here in Shreveport. I'm so thrilled that you all came out. It's kind of getting close to home, if you know what I mean. I'm proud to be in the great State of Louisiana.

The last time I was in Shreveport was on September the 11th, 2001. I went to Barksdale Air Force Base. Since that time, the world has seen the resolve of the United States of America. I thank the men and women who wore our uniform then at Barksdale, and I know you join me today in thanking them to make sure America is free.

We're grateful for our freedom here in America. We love our freedoms. Nobody is going to take freedom away from this country. But part of living in a free society means we have responsibilities as citizens. We have the obligation as a citizen of America to do our duty, and one of the duties we have is when it comes to election time, one of the duties is to go vote. So I'm here in the great State of Louisiana urging all the citizens, Republicans and Democrats and folks who could care less about political party, to go to the polls this Saturday. But I've got a suggestion. [*Laughter*] For the good of Louisiana, for the good

of everybody in Louisiana, Suzie Terrell needs to be the next United States Senator.

I'm proud of the race she's running. She talks about what she believes in. She sets the right kind of tone. She's the kind of person with whom I can work to get something done for Louisiana and the people of Louisiana. No doubt in my mind, she's the right choice for everybody who lives in this State.

And I want to thank you for coming to show your support for Suzie. I want to thank you for your activity at the grassroots level. You need, over the next couple of days, to go to your coffee shops, your community centers and tell the people that you've got a good one running for the United States Senate. You've got somebody who can do the job for all the people of this State. She's counting on you, and I'm counting on you to do everything you can to turn out a big vote and send this good woman to the United States Senate.

And we need to have Lee Fletcher in the House of Representatives too. I look forward to working with Lee. I look forward to having Lee a part of a fine delegation from the great State of Louisiana. He'll fit in just right with people like Billy Tauzin, who's doing a fabulous job for our country, Jim McCrery and David Vitter—all of them fine Members of Congress. So

when you get in that booth, make sure you not only vote for Suzie, but if you live in Lee Fletcher's district, pull the Fletcher lever, too.

I appreciate so very much the Governor showing up. Yes, he's a good man. Foster is a good man. He's my kind of guy. He's down-to-earth. He speaks his mind. But most importantly, he's done in office what he said he would do. He's been a great Governor for the people of Louisiana. One of these days, he's going to invite me to come hunting again.

I regret that the first team of our family isn't here today. She's helping decorate the White House. But I am proud of Laura. She is a fabulous First Lady for America. And she sends her best to Suzie and Suzie's family. And like me, she urges you all to get to those polls come Saturday. Show up. Do your duty. Send a good, strong message that Louisiana is wise when it comes to electing candidates. It makes sense to have one in one party and a Senator in the majority party if you want to get something done.

And one thing about Suzie is, she's got a good record. She's proven herself to be a competent soul, somebody who can get the job done. You might remember the election commissioner's office; it needed a house-cleansing. She cleaned house. There's now integrity in that office. People can be proud of that office, thanks to Suzie Haik Terrell. She told the people of Louisiana she would do the job, and she has done that job. She understands who she's accountable to. She's accountable to the people. She understands she works for the people of Louisiana.

She saved \$20 million for the taxpayers of Louisiana. She's got an awesome responsibility, and she saved money, because she understands what I know: When you spend the Government's money, you don't spend—it's not the Government's money you're spending; it's the people's money.

No, she's got a can-do spirit. See, we need people to go to Washington to set

aside all the political bickering that tends to dominate the discourse, to get things done on behalf of the American people. That's what we need. We need an attitude of cooperation. Oh, I expect there to be independent voices in Washington, DC, and no question about her, she's an independent voice. She kind of tells you what's on her mind. But it's an attitude that's important. We need an attitude in the Senate to bring people together so we can say that we're doing the people's business and we're making a difference in people's lives.

And we're making some progress. I was proud to sign the Department of Homeland Security bill. It made sense. It now means we're going to reorganize our Government so we can do our job, and that is to protect the American people from further attack. We want people all focused in the same direction. We want cultures to change, if need be, to make sure that we can do everything we can to say to the American people, "We're working overtime to protect you." We need to know who's coming in the country, what they're bringing into the country, if they're leaving the country when they're supposed to be leaving the country, so America is protected.

We're making progress about bringing people together to get things done. I'm convinced Suzie's election will continue that progress. I went to the Pentagon yesterday and fulfilled a campaign pledge, signed the most significant increase in the authorization of defense spending since the President—Ronald Reagan was the President.

I was able to sign a piece of legislation that will get our hardhats back to work. I signed a terrorism insurance bill that will enable construction projects that have been on hold to go forward. I'm worried about the fact that some people are looking for work and can't find work in America. I want our hardhats working. I want our welders welding. I want the construction people back to work. I want to reward the hardhats, not the trial lawyers of America.

We're making progress up there. Suzie's election will help us make more progress. We've got work to do on education. Listen, anytime any child can't read means we've got to stay on education. I appreciate the Governor's hard work of joining in setting high standards. We need somebody in the Senate who will join me in making sure we've got local control of our schools in America.

Last year, we spent \$847 million of Federal money on Louisiana schools, and that's good. But now we're starting to ask the question that Mike's been asking and I know Suzie will ask: "Are we getting our money's worth?" See, you've got to ask that question if you don't want any child left behind. You know, are the dollars we're spending making a difference in the lives of our children? Can our children read and write and add and subtract? And when we find they can, we'll praise the teachers. And for those of you who are teachers, thanks for what you do. But what's important is that when we find children in schools which won't teach and won't change, that we challenge the status quo. No child should be left behind in America.

And speaking about schools, I want to thank the Byrd High School Band and the Parkway High School Band for coming. I'm glad you all came. I'm sorry you had to miss school to come. *[Laughter]* Just put my name on the excuse slip. And if you're 18, make sure you vote.

We've got more work to do. We've got to make sure this economy continues to grow. I'm for a growth agenda—want to do things in Washington, DC, that helps create jobs. The role of Government—and Suzie understands this—the role of Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which the small business can grow to be a big business, in which the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes. And the best way to help people who are looking for work, the best way to stimulate economic vitality is to make the tax cuts we passed permanent.

See, when that economy started slowing down, I decided to fulfill what I said I was going to do and urge that the Government let people keep more of their own money. See, when you have more of your own money, it means you're likely to demand an additional good or a service. And when you demand additional good or a service, somebody is likely to produce the good or a service. And when somebody produces the good or a service, it means somebody in Louisiana or Texas or anywhere else is likely to be able to find a job. The tax relief plan came at the right time. And now, in order to make sure our economy is strong and vibrant, we better make sure the tax cuts are permanent.

And there's one person in this Senate race who's willing to stand up and say she will join the President in listening to the people and making tax cuts permanent, and that is Suzie Terrell.

No, we've got more work to do. We've got more work to do. I need somebody in the Senate with whom I can work and Billy can work to make sure we get us an energy bill. We got a problem when it comes to energy. We get too much of our energy from countries that may not like us. That's a problem. We can do a better job of conserving. We can do a better job of promoting technologies that will make us less dependent on foreign sources of crude oil. But we've got to do a better job here at home of finding more hydrocarbons in the United States of America. An energy bill is good for our job base. It's good for economic security, and it's good for national security.

I want to thank Billy Tauzin for working hard to get an energy bill. That new Senate may make it easier for us to get a bill done on behalf of the American people.

We've got more work to do, and I look forward to working with Suzie to make sure that we modernize Medicare. See, medicine has changed, and the Medicare system hasn't changed. Medicine is modern, but Medicare is stuck in the past. For the sake

of our seniors, we need to fulfill our national promise and modernize Medicare, which means prescription drugs for our seniors.

I look forward to working with Suzie on behalf of the citizens of Louisiana. I also look forward to working with Suzie to make sure that our judiciary represents the values of Louisiana. Amazing what an election did—kind of changed the attitude in Washington. Up until recently, I couldn't get a lot of my judges through the Senate. They were playing politics with the judges. I had named some very fine people from around the country, good, honest people, and we couldn't get them through because they wanted to play politics.

You need somebody from Louisiana who will join with this President to make sure the judges I name reflect the values of Louisiana. We don't need any more people legislating. We don't want our judges legislating. We want our judges interpreting the Constitution. Those are the kind of judges I'll name, and I can count on Suzie's vote to make sure they get confirmed.

But the biggest job we have for a while is to protect this country. That's the biggest job we've got. Our most awesome responsibility is to make this homeland secure. And the best way to do it is to chase the killers down one at a time and bring them to justice. That's the biggest job facing this administration and the next Congress and administrations and Congresses to come. This is a long haul to get them. *[Laughter]*

I guess they didn't realize who they were hitting. They probably thought the national religion was materialism and that we were so selfish that we all might file a lawsuit or two. *[Laughter]* They didn't understand America. They don't understand that when it comes to defending our freedoms, it doesn't matter how long it takes. We will defend freedom no matter what the cost.

And we're making progress. We're making progress. It's a different kind of war. You've just got to know it's a different kind of war. In the old days, we could destroy

tanks and airplanes and ships, and people say, "Well, they're making progress." It's a different kind of war because we're fighting people who are—they send youngsters to their suicidal deaths, and they try to find a dark cave. They're kind of lurching around in the dark corners of some cities around the world. They're in over 60 countries. And slowly but surely, we're dismantling the terrorist network which hates us because of what we love. See, they hate the fact that we love freedom. They can't stand the fact that in this country people can worship the Almighty God any way he or she sees fit.

Thanks to our military, thanks to our fantastic military, we won the first battle of the first war of the 21st century. And we won it when we got rid of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. But in so doing, it's important for you to remind your youngsters that this great country never went in to conquer anybody. We went in to liberate. Thanks to America and our friends, many young girls go to school for the first time in Afghanistan. Not only did we rout the Taliban and many of the killers they harbor, but we freed people to realize their dreams. And we're not leaving. We're going to stay there to make sure this good country is secure and the good country can flourish and that the hope we want for our own children is the hope that mothers and dads in Afghanistan can realize for their children.

We're making progress on this war against terror. Sometimes you'll see the progress, and sometimes you won't. It's a different kind of war. The other day, we hauled a guy in named al-Nashiri. That's not a household name here in America. *[Laughter]* I can understand why some go blank when they hear his name. But he was the Al Qaida commander in the Gulf states. Let me just put it to you this way: He no longer has the capacity to do what he did in the past, which was to mastermind the U.S.S. *Cole* that killed—the plot on the *Cole* that killed American soldiers.

He's out of action, for the good of the world.

Sometimes you'll see it, and sometimes you won't. But you've got to know that in this war against terror, the doctrine stands that says, "Either you're with us, or you're with the terrorists." And a lot of nations have heard that message, and they're with us. We're cutting off their money. We're sharing intelligence. We're hunting down the killers one at a time. It doesn't matter how long it takes. This country will stay the course until Al Qaida is completely demolished.

But September the 11th brought home a new reality, and it's important for all our citizens to understand that reality. See, a lot of us, when we were raised, never really worried about the homeland. We all believed that two oceans would forever separate us from harm's way and that if there was a threat gathering overseas, we could pick and choose whether or not we wanted to be involved in dealing with that threat. September the 11th delivered a chilling message to our country, and that is, oceans no longer protect us. And therefore, it is my obligation to make sure that we address gathering threats overseas before they could do harm to the American people.

And that's why I elevated the issue of Iraq. That's why I took our message of peace and freedom to countries around the world. I want them to understand the nature of the man who runs Iraq is the nature of a man who doesn't tell the truth. He says he won't have weapons of mass destruction. He's got them. He's not only got them; he's used them. And he's not only used them in his neighborhood; he's used them on his own people. That's the nature of the man with whom we deal. For 11 long years, he has deceived and denied.

So I went to the United Nations. I said, "When is enough enough?" They voted 15 to nothing to say, "Now enough is enough." The members of the Security Council had a chance, and they accepted the challenge to make sure that this United Nations be-

came an effective body when it comes to keeping the peace, not an empty debating society.

Then I went to NATO—strong Allies in NATO—and overwhelmingly the message was, "Enough is enough." And now there's inspectors inside this country. But I want to tell you, the issue is not the inspectors. The issue is whether or not Mr. Saddam Hussein will disarm like he said he would. We're not interested in hide-and-seek inside Iraq. The fundamental question is, in the name of peace, in the name of security, not only for America and the American people, in the name of security for our friends in the neighborhood, in the name of freedom, will this man disarm? The choice is his. And if he does not disarm, the United States of America will lead a coalition and disarm him in the name of peace.

We have an obligation to our children and our children's children to do everything we can to make sure the homeland is secure. And we'll meet the obligation. We'll meet that obligation together.

You know, the amazing thing about America is that I can predict—boldly predict and certainly predict—that out of the evil done to our country will come incredible good. Because of the nature of our country, I can say that. By being tough and strong and united in the face of danger, we can bring peace to the world. I believe that. I believe that by doing what we need to do to secure the world from terrorist attack, to rid tyrants of weapons of mass destruction, to make sure that somebody like Saddam Hussein doesn't serve as a training base or a provider of weapons of mass destruction to terrorist networks—by doing our job, that the world will be more peaceful, by standing strong for what we believe, by remembering that freedom is not America's gift to the world, but God's gift to each and every human being, that we can achieve peace. I want you to tell your kids and your grandkids that amidst all the speculation about war

and military, that our drive and our vision is for a peaceful world in which everybody can realize their potential and live in peace.

And here at home we have a chance to achieve some incredible good out of the evil done to our country. September the 11th shook our soul. I think it has helped awaken a spirit in the country, a spirit that understands that serving something greater than ourself in life is part of the American creed, that the American spirit is bigger than just any selfish ambition.

Today when I landed at the airport, I met Mary Anne Blanchard Selber and Jean Sayres. These ladies have started the Providence House here in Shreveport. This is a—it's a home to provide shelter to the homeless. They follow their hearts. The reason I bring up this example is because they represent the true strength of our country. The true strength of our country lay in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens.

You see, out of the evil done to America can come a more compassionate America. We've got to understand that amidst our plenty, there are people who hurt. There's addiction and hopelessness. There are people who wonder whether or not the American Dream is meant for them. So long as any of us hurt, we all hurt. Yet we can solve the problems in our society by loving a neighbor just like we like to be loved ourselves. We can solve America's problems by putting our arm around the lonely and the hopeless and say, "I care for you. I love you." America can change, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

And the Providence House is one example of what I'm talking about. They represent the true strength of our country, people who love people, people who care for those who hurt, people who understand that Government's role is limited. We can hand out money, but we can't put hope in people's hearts or a sense of purpose

in people's lives. That's why I'm so strong for the Faith-Based Initiative. I understand the power of faith in the lives of our citizens around this country.

No, if you want to join the war on terror, if you want to show the world the true worth of America, love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. See what you can do to help mentor a child. Go see a shut-in. It's the small acts of kindness and decency which define the true victory in the war against terror, which will show the world what this country is all about.

Perhaps best defined for me and, I suspect, others, as they come up in America—the spirit was defined best on Flight 93. Remember that when people were flying across our country, they thought they were on an average business trip, or they thought they might be just taking an average trip to go see a loved one, and they found out the plane they were on was being used as a weapon. And they told their loved ones over the telephone, "I love you," and "Goodbye." They said a prayer. A guy said, "Let's roll." They took the plane into the ground to serve something greater than themselves.

No, the spirit of America is strong today. I can boldly predict that out of the evil done to America will come great good, because this is the greatest nation, full of the finest people on the face of the Earth.

May God bless you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:54 a.m. at the Hirsch Coliseum at the State Fairgrounds of Louisiana. In his remarks, he referred to Lee Fletcher, candidate for Louisiana's Fifth Congressional District; Gov. M.J. "Mike" Foster of Louisiana; Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, Al Qaida's chief of operations for the Persian Gulf; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.